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**Statement before the Assembly Committee on Elections and Campaign Reform
in support of Assembly Bill 619**

Assembly Bill 619 provides local communities the authority to create local elections boards and regulate the financing of campaigns for county, city, town and village offices. Currently, local elections are subject to state campaign finance laws. The Democracy Campaign supports this local option initiative and believes in the potential of forward-looking communities to foster innovation in election campaign financing and ethics. This bill enables willing local governments to become "local laboratories" for campaign finance reform. Please note that in 2009 the Center for Governmental Studies listed 16 such laboratories of democracy already exist in other states like North Carolina, Oregon, and New Mexico. We can learn from their successes and challenges, and they from ours, as we continue to refine these processes. We simply need to have the doors open to such opportunities.

In Wisconsin, villages and cities are the entities currently entitled to home rule protections. But townships, counties, and districts are not covered under the state's home rule provisions. Though there may be no express limitation on local authority for Madison and other cities in Wisconsin to implement workable local election campaign programs, such programs would, however, conflict with state statute (Ch. 11 which applies to all elections in Wisconsin). Thus they need this enabling legislation.

It is important to emphasize to the committee that the state's budget is not impacted by this legislation or likely any reforms that local governments might seek to implement following enactment of this legislation.

WDC supports both bills before the committee today, AB 619 and AB 751. One seeks to build the integrity of local elections while the other does so for federal elections. I look forward to further public discussion before the committee on future efforts to reform and build the integrity of our state elections.